

## **VPP: Intermech Inc. construction fabrication site in Richland achieves top recognition for occupational safety & health as Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) STAR.**

On August 31, 2005, the Intermech Inc. construction fabrication site in Richland celebrated achieving the prestigious VPP STAR status with an award ceremony, followed by a catered luncheon for guests and employees. The engineering and fabrication facility, which was the scope of the VPP recognition, designs, fabricates tests and installs HVAC components and systems. The fabrication shop is located in a large warehouse leased from the Port of Benton which was converted into a sheet metal HVAC fabrication shop.



Pictured in Photo (Sitting - Mel James, WISHA Acting Senior Program Manager. Standing - Lynn Sant, Safety Manager Intermech Inc. Richland)

Lynn Sant, Safety Manager of Intermech Inc. as the MC for the ceremony, made opening remarks regarding the scope of this monumental achievement and introduced Jeremiah Griffith, Safety Committee member; Marcus Mercer, Safety Committee Chairman and Shop Steward for Sheetmetal Workers Local 66 and Frank Teague, Vice-President Intermech Inc. All spoke of the significance of the efforts to achieve this prestigious award. Mel James, Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) Acting Senior Program Manager, presented the VPP STAR plaque, flag and addressed the audience on the leadership commitment, employee involvement and working together in partnership which resulted in the quality of the site's safety and health programs. Karl Rickenbach, Project Manager Intermech Inc., received the plaque and the safety committee members received the VPP flag from the VPP onsite evaluation team members.



Pictured in Photo - Sitting: Karl Rickenbach, Frank Teague, Lynn Sant, Mel James, Jeremiah Griffith. Standing: Marcus Mercer.

Numerous speakers commented that their work on improving safety and health at the site is not done until they achieve "An Accident Free environment" through their diligent commitment to continuous improvement.

VPP status is approved by WISHA Services for worksite applicants who have achieved outstanding safety and health programs. Only 1345 sites nationally have achieved this elite VPP status. The Intermech Inc. Richland site was approved as a VPP STAR site on August 10, 2005 and is WISHA's twenty second STAR site.



Pictured in Photo (from left to right): Sitting: Frank Teague, Intermech Vice President; Lynn Sant, Safety Manager Intermech Inc.; Marcus Mercer, Safety Committee Chairman and Shop Steward, Sheetmetal Workers Local #66. Standing: Karl Rickenbach, Project Manager receiving the VPP plaque from Mel James, WISHA, Acting Senior Program Manager.

The Intermech Inc. fabrication shop, which employs 108 workers, earned its VPP STAR through commitment, leadership and extensive employee participation in developing a continuously improving safety and health program and safety record. The site applied for the VPP and received an on-site review by a team of four WISHA safety and health professionals to achieve VPP STAR status.

The site maintains their status by continuous improvement of their safety and health programs, conducting comprehensive annual self-evaluations of their safety and health programs and receiving a comprehensive onsite review every three years by WISHA staff.

The worksite's potential hazards at this worksite are those typically associated with sheet metal HVAC systems fabrication/construction, including machinery and hand tools with moving parts, electrical hazards, aerial lifts, cranes, hoists, rigging, and material-handling equipment, ergonomic hazards, walking/working surfaces, high noise levels, welding exposures and hazardous chemicals. Despite these hazards, the site's three-year average injury/illness recordable rate and days away/restricted/transferred work incident rate for 2002-2004 is 76% below and 75% below, respectively, the national average for similar industries.





Picture: Safety Committee members receiving VPP flag from VPP onsite evaluation team members.

WISHA's review team observed that management and employees are committed to continuous improvements of the site's safety and health program. The safety and health program provides excellent protection from the potential hazards at this worksite.



Picture: VPP STAR celebration luncheon

For more information, contact Lynn Sant, Safety Manager for the Intermech Inc. Richland site at 509-373-1137. For more information about WISHA's Voluntary Protection Program, in which WISHA and Washington companies work together to improve safety and health programs, call WISHA, [Kenneth Werenko](#), Safety and Health VPP Specialist, 360-902-5515.